(c) whether more complaints about irregularities in selection of ROs/distributorships have been received for reference to this Committee and if so, the action taken thereon;

(d) by when the report of this Committee will be published; and

(e) the expenses incurred by Government/public sector oil companies on this Committee so far alongwith the details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) to (d) The Supreme Court of India *vide* its judgement, dated 20-12-2002, appointed a Two-Judge Committee, comprising a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India and a retired judge of the High Court of Delhi to examine the cases of selection of retail outlet dealerships (petrol pumps), LPG distributorships and SKO-LDO dealerships, which were reported in the media (The Indian Express) during July-August, 2002. The total number of such cases referred by the Supreme Court of India to the said Committee is 414. The Committee is likely to submit its report to the Supreme Court of India within or around the first quarter of the year 2004.

(e) Apart from the engagement of the services of an advocate and a stenographer for assisting the judges, all other secretarial/infrastructural facilities are provided to the Two-Judge Committee by the public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). While each of the two judges is being paid at the rate of Rs. 10,000/- per sitting, the advocate and the stenographer are being paid at the rate of Rs. 25,000/- and Rs. 3,000/- respectively per month. The expenditure being incurred on this Committee is being borne by the OMCs.

Finance for LPG storage facility

734. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering to build a strategic storage facility for LPG at an outlay of Rs. 2750 crores to cover 45 days' requirement of LPG;

(b) in what manner finance for this facility will be sourced; and

(c) whether USA has offered technical know-how to build LPG storage facility in India and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) and (b) Oil Industry has proposed setting up of 305 Thousand Metric Tonnes (TMT) additional tankage for LPG, to have an overall demand cover of 45 days by the year 2006-07 at the estimated cost of Rs. 5 crore per TMT. Oil industry has suggested to meet the requirement of fund through OIDB.

(c) No, Sir.

Vigilance Mechanism

735. SHRI K. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Vigilance Mechanisms in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and in the PSUs under the Ministry have been effective in curbing the menace of corruption;

(b) the number of complaints handled by the Vigilance Department in the Ministry and in PSUs about their employees during the last two years and the result thereof; and

(c) the steps contemplated to strengthen the Vigilance Mechanism in the Ministry and in PSUs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN) : (a) to (c) The Vigilance Administration in the Ministry and PSUs enquires and recommends cases for institution of departmental proceedings whenever, *prima facie*, cases are established. Several other programmes and activities are undertaken to sensitize the employees regarding need for providing transparency in administration.

The number of complaints handled by the Vigilance Deptt. in the Ministry and in Oil PSUs during the last two years *i.e.* from 1-1-2002 to 30-11-2003 is 842. The Vigilance Administration recommended departmental proceedings against 248 employees and administrative action against 95 employees during the above period.

The study of systems and procedures for streamlining the Vigilance Mechanism is undertaken from time to time. Preparation of the Agreed